

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services



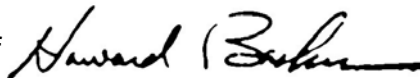
Governor

July 24, 2006

IZB-FY0607-01

To: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Providers

From: Howard Backer, M.D., M.P.H., Chief
Immunization Branch



Subject: Prevention of Perinatal Hepatitis B Transmission

More than 5,000 women with chronic hepatitis B infection give birth in California each year, according to estimates by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Without prophylaxis, nearly 90% of these infants will develop chronic hepatitis B infection. However, at least 90% of perinatal infections can be prevented by post exposure prophylaxis given within 12 hours of birth. Unfortunately, significant numbers of infants born to chronically infected women do not receive appropriate prophylaxis and thus are at risk of chronic hepatitis B infection and premature death from cirrhosis or liver cancer.

To address this challenge, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) released updated recommendations for hepatitis B immunization of infants in December 2005 which have been endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). To ensure that all infants born to HBsAg-positive women receive prophylaxis at birth, ACIP recommends that *all* newborns receive a birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine before leaving the hospital. In rare circumstances, the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine may be delayed beyond birth to a maximum age of two months for an infant who weighs >2,000 g and whose mother is HBsAg negative. When such a decision is made, a physician's order to withhold the birth dose and a copy of the original laboratory report indicating that the mother was HBsAg negative during this pregnancy should be placed in the infant's medical record. The ACIP recommendations are available from CDC in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5416.pdf).

Some of the updated ACIP recommendations are summarized below:
All infants should receive the hepatitis B vaccine series as part of the recommended childhood immunization schedule.

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- The first dose of Hepatitis B vaccine should be administered before hospital discharge to all medically stable infants with a birth weight \geq 2000 g.
- Infants born to mothers who are HBsAg positive should receive hepatitis B vaccine and hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) \leq 12 hours of birth.
- The maternal HBsAg test results and the dates of administration of all doses of the hepatitis B vaccine series should be documented in the infant's medical record.
- Healthcare providers should test infants born to HBsAg positive mothers for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) and antibody to hepatitis B surface antigen (anti-HBs) after completion of the hepatitis B vaccine series at 9-18 months.

Thank you for your participation in the VFC program and for your efforts to prevent hepatitis B in infants.

Enclosures

cc: DHS, Immunization Branch Field Representatives
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